[1] THE KINSHIP SYSTEM OF THE NAYARS OF MALABAR

I The Malabar Coast

(1) Physical Features

131 The Malabar Coast lies in the extreme south-west of India, along the shores of the Arabian Sea. The coastline is 360 miles long, the area 14,908 square miles. It is divided off from the rest of South India by the Western Ghats, a mountain wall broken only in the centre of the [167] area by the Palghat Gap. Though periodic immigrations have taken place from the eastern plateau of peninsular India into the coastal region, the mountains prevented close contacts between the people who became established there [177] and their neighbors to the east. On the other hand, its position laid the area open to contacts by sea with many peoples, including Jews and Arabs (1,000 B.C.), Egyptians and Phoenicians (5th century B.C.), Romans (1st century A.D.), Chinese (6th century A.D.), and after 1498 the Portuguese followed by the English, Dutch and French.

133 The coast falls roughly into three natural divisions: the coastal strip, the midlands, and the highlands rising into the Ghats.

[241] The coastal strip is flat and sandy. Its chief product is coconuts, with some rice and bananas. [2] In the southern half of the area it is broken by salt-water lagoons which for over 100 miles form a continuous navigable chain, parallel to 133 the sea. Almost all the chief towns (from north • 361 to south, Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé,

133 Calicut, Cochin, Alleppey, Quilon and Trivan-
361 drum), are situated on the coast, divided by
chains of little fishing villages. In the northern
133 half a railway runs along its edge from Manga-
361 lore in South Canara, southeast to Shoranur,
496 where it divides and turns off northeast to Mad-
ras and south to Ernakulam, the capital of Co-
chin State. In the extreme south another railway
comes in from Tinnevelly District in the east,
and follows the coast from Quilon to Trivandrum.
(See Map 1.)

133 The midlands comprise low hills and fertile
241 valleys. Broad strips of alluvial rice-lands lie
in the valleys, thinning out as the land rises into
the foothills of the Ghats. On the hill slopes are
gardens of coconut palms, tapioca, plantains,
pepper, ginger, rubber, cashew-nut trees, and
many fruit trees such as jack and mango. Cash-
ews (introduced by the Portuguese) and pepper
have become for the past 100 years particularly
important cash crops on the hill-slopes of North
Malabar District, while bamboo is more preva-
lent in South Malabar District and Cochin. The
coconut is ubiquitous and very important in the
total economy. There are a few small bazaar
[361] towns, [3] but most of the people live in villages,
on garden land surrounding or surrounded by wet
paddy-flats.

133 The highlands rising into the Ghats are covered
[136] mainly by thick virgin forests harbouring wild
elephant and small tigers. The foothills are
[162] sparsely populated by people of the same cul-
tural groups as are found in the plains, while
higher in the mountains live primitive tribes.

564 794 rank came certain small castes of middle class, non-military Nayars whose work was connected with temples. Vattekads were oil-mongers for temples, Odatt Nayars, temple tile-makers; and Andura Nayars temple pot-makers. One Vattekad lineage was present in each village to supply oil to the temple; its members might receive good from all the higher castes but might not give to them. Often, the headman of the Vattekad lineage was also the shaman of the Na- [791] yar Bhagavadi temple. Odatt and Andura Nayars were very small castes, usually with one lineage to about six villages.

564 Below the middle class Nayars in rank came three castes of servant-Nayars, also non-mili- [764] tary: Chidigans or funeral priests of the higher matrilineal castes, Veluthedans or washermen [305] of all the castes above them; and Vilakkatara- [296] vans or barbers of all the castes above them. One lineage of each of these castes was usually present in each village. Chidigans ranked above barbers and washermen, who disputed for rank and would not interdine or intermarry.

[361] In each village, all of the castes so far mentioned (provided they were present) were called "high," "good" [24] or "clean" castes and lived in a separate portion of the village, each house in its own large garden, round the temples and the local janmi's house. Except for Nayar barbers and washermen, all might enter either Nambudiri or Nayar temples. Within this group, [783] lower castes were forbidden to touch higher castes because of ritual pollution, but individuals of different castes might approach each other within a few feet,

564 within a few feet. Equal interdining took place
[244] only between members of the same caste or sub-caste, but at a higher caste feast members of lower castes might receive food from higher caste hosts. The Nambudiris, royalty, chiefs, temple servants, retainers, middle-class and servant Nayars thus collectively formed the
[611] "good" castes of the society. Nambudiris and two small castes of their temple servants were patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal. (1)

[361] Below all these castes, living in a separate
[783] part of the village, were the "low" or "polluting" castes. These included in order of rank, Iravas or toddy-tappers and tenant-farmers, with 20 to 50 households per village; Kanisans (astrologers) with one to three households per village; the artisan castes (blacksmiths, gold-smiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers and stone-masons, who ranked equally) each with one to three houses per village; low caste washermen and barbers (who ranked equally) each with one to five houses per village; and bow-makers, each with about one to ten houses per village. Iravas,
[611] Kanisans, washermen and barbers had double
[595] unilineal descent: [25] patrilineal, patrilocal ex-
[614] tended families with fraternal polyandry, cross-cut by large exogamous dispersed matrilineal clans. Artisans and bow-makers had patrilineal descent with patrilocal extended families and
[437] fraternal polyandry. All of these castes worked for each other and for the "good" castes of the
514 village. Iravas, the most numerous and influen-
427 tial, owned their own house-sites and leased rice-lands and other garden lands from the matrilineal

ritual pollution decreed that the several lower castes might not touch each other, and that members of each lower caste, according to their ritual rank, must refrain from approaching members of the "good" castes within distance ranging from 15 to 40 feet.

Finally, on the outskirts of the village, in a separate area, lived the serf-castes of Parayas and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella-makers; in each village two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple-servants and Nambudiris. Each property-group of these castes owned one or more families of Pulayas as its ancestral property who could be bought and sold. Food, household materials and clothing were provided for serfs by their owners. Th Pulayas were freed by law in 1850, since when they have been landless agricultural labourers serving the "good" castes and Iravas for daily wages in kind. As "exterior" castes, Parayas and Pulayas may not approach "good" castes within a distance of about 60 feet and may not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main roads. (These rules were however abolished by law at Independence in 1947.) [27] Each caste is endogamous and the two may not interdine. Unlike the higher castes they have a bilateral kinship system without unilineal descent groups. In addition to these Hindu castes there were and are in Kerala large groups of Muslims and Christians. (2) Christians had their separate villages and were divided into castes in a similar manner to Hindus. Muslims

361 lived in bazaar streets in the towns, or some-
563 times in separate villages, where they were served by low caste Hindu labourers; alternatively small groups of them might occupy Hindu villages where they had the ritual rank of Iravas (from whom they were chiefly converted), and usually held lands on the same terms of triennial tenure from Nayar kanakker.

564. The lower polluting castes and the exterior
783 castes had their own small temples, dedicated to their own deities. They were forbidden to approach the temples of the "good" castes and
564 might not take part in daily worship there. An-
796 nually, however, a large temple festival was
571 held in each Nayar, chiefly or royal Bhagavadi temple. At such a festival, representatives of all the lower castes of the village attended and performed ceremonies and dances peculiar to their caste at approriate distances from the temple. Such festivals apparently reinforced the mutual rights and obligations of the several castes and dramatized the solidarity and also the social distance between them. In accordance with the normal range of their social relations, members of the lower castes usually attended such festivals only in their own or adjacent villages. At the festivals of the chiefly temple of the nad, however, members of "good" castes throughout the nad were required to participate; similarly, at festivals of the royal temples, representatives of the "good" castes throughout the kingdom were called to attend and express their allegiance to the ruler and his deity.

613 Powerful emotional ties bind a Nayar to his ancestral
[342] land and to his house, which is large and beautifully constructed of whitewashed laterite, carved wooden pillars and a tiled roof. The lineage-names of retainer-Nayars are the names of original ancestral sites in the village, e.g., Kirakkutt Velappil ("Eastern Garden"). Desavari lineages take the name of their desam, chiefly lineages of their nad, and royal lineages of their kingdom. The knowledge that their matrilineal forbears once jointly owned a house and land holds lineage-members together.

[361] Except in unusual circumstances (i.e., if it is dying out) a lineage comprises several households, traditionally congregated in separate gardens some distance apart on a stretch of dry land
613 in the village. Today with the vast increase in
596 population during British rule, a lineage may comprise up to 20 or more households; traditionally, it seems usually to have contained about four to ten. Each of these households comprised a segment of the lineage, [41] usually, a group of siblings together with the children and daughters' children of the sisters. The household was also the unit whose members jointly owned ancestral garden land, kanam rice lands and movable property. I call it a property-group. The lineage as a whole (unless it were dying out and comprised only one property-group) owned no property in common and its members had no economic cooperation as a group.

613 The lineage was exogamous, and matrilineal kinship terms were extended throughout its

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

nese (from at least the sixth century) and after 1498 the Portuguese, followed by the English, Dutch, and French (Logan, 1951, I: 251–254, 258, 294–399).

The coast falls roughly into three natural divisions: the coastal strip, the midlands, and the highlands rising into the Ghats (cf. Buchanan, 1807: 565–566). The coastal strip is flat and sandy. Its chief product is coconuts, with some rice and bananas. In the southern half it is broken by salt-water lagoons which for over a hundred miles form a continuous navigable chain parallel to the sea. Most of the chief towns are situated on the coast, divided by chains of little fishing villages. Many of the coast towns are ancient, and most of them lie at the mouths of navigable rivers which flow westward from the Ghats. From time immemorial raw materials, chiefly pepper, were brought by boat from the inland hillsides for shipment from these ports.

The midlands comprise low hills and fertile valleys. Broad strips of alluvial rice lands lie in the valleys, thinning out as the land rises into the foothills of the Ghats. On the hill slopes are gardens of coconut palms, bananas, pepper, ginger, and many fruit trees such as jack and mango. It was probably wild pepper which was exported in Roman times, but pepper and other spices have been deliberately cultivated at least since 1290 (Ricci, 1931: 328). Cashew nuts, introduced by the Portuguese, formed an additional export crop. Small merchant settlements, market-centers, and the military fortifications of petty chiefs existed at strategic points on river banks. Some of these centers grew into bazaar towns in the nineteenth century. But the mass of the population traditionally lived, as today, in scattered village communities on garden land surrounding or surrounded by fields of wet rice, the main subsistence crop. Wet-rice cultivation depended on plough agriculture with teams of oxen or water buffalo. Goats and chickens were the other significant domestic animals.

The highlands rising into the Ghats were covered mainly by deciduous forests. The foothills, interspersed with occasional rice flats, were sparsely populated by people of the same cultural groups as those in the plains. They eked out their wet-rice cultivation with garden crops of fruits, spices, and vegetables, with shifting hoe cultivation of dry grains on hillsides, and with forest hunting of elephant, deer, and pig. Higher in the mountains lived primitive tribes of hunters and shifting cultivators, having only occasional contacts with the kingdoms of the plains.

Throughout most of the area Kerala's rainfall varies between 75 and 170 inches, being heaviest in the north where the mountains are

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wil Kerala A Wil
Central Kerala Nayar

564 tioned were called "high," "good," or "clean" castes. They lived in
[361] a separate portion of the village around the temples and the landlord's establishment, with each house in its own fenced garden. Except for the servant Nayars all might enter either Brahman or Nayar temples. Within this group, lower castes were forbidden to touch higher castes because of rules of ritual pollution, but individuals of different castes might approach each other within a few feet. Equal interdining took place only between caste fellows, but members of lower castes might *receive* food from higher-caste hosts. In ritual terms these castes thus formed the upper ranks of society, although only the Nayar retainers and those above them were economically and socially aristocrats. Nambudiris and two small castes of their temple servants were patrilineal; all the rest were matrilineal.

101 I have designated as "Nayars" all the castes which bear this title
121 today. They are not a unitary group but a named category of castes.
564 Traditionally, the title Nayar seems not to have been extended to all these castes. Before 1498 the military Nayars or retainer Nayars were called Lokar (Ayyar, 1938: 32). What the other matrilineal castes were called is not known. "Nayar" was not then a caste name
[703] but a title conferred by the king on lineages whose members had won special military honor. The Portuguese called all the soldiers "Nayars" and during the period of European trade it seems to have come into use as a title held by all the military castes. Some Nayars say that the temple menial castes and the matrilineal castes of washermen and barbers usurped the title only during British rule, in order to raise their status. The higher temple-servant castes, although matrilineal, never adopted the title because they ranked above the military Nayars and had honorable titles of their own. This paper primarily concerns the Nayar military retainers, their village headmen, chiefs, and royalty.

THE HIGHER POLLUTING CASTES

564 The high castes were the religious and secular aristocrats and their
162 personal servants. In many respects the polluting castes lived a sepa-
621 rate social life, being located in a different part of the village. They included, in order of rank, Tiyyars (called Iravas in Cochin), who were palm-wine makers and tenant farmers, with twenty to forty households per village; Kanisans or astrologers, with one to three households per village; the artisan castes of blacksmiths, goldsmiths, carpenters, bell-metal workers, and stonemasons (who ranked equally), each with one to three houses per village; low-caste washermen and barbers (who ranked equally), each with one to five houses per vil-

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Central Kerala Nayar

lage; and bow makers, each with about one to ten houses per village. Tiyyars, astrologers, washermen, and barbers had double unilineal descent: localized patrilineages with dispersed exogamous matrilineal clans. Artisans and bow makers had patrilineages only.

The polluting castes worked for each other and for the higher castes. Tiyyars held land on a sub-tenure from landlords and Nayar tenants. Astrologers and artisans gave services to the higher castes, to each other, and to the Tiyyars, who ranked above them. Barbers worked for all the higher polluting castes but not for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar barber. Washermen laundered for all the higher polluting castes but not regularly for the "good" castes, who employed the Nayar washerman. However, the low-caste washerman's lineage owed services to the "good" castes at death, menstruation, and childbirth. Bow makers served Nayars and Tiyyars. Each of the polluting castes was endogamous and interdined only within the caste.

THE LOWER POLLUTING CASTES

On the outskirts of the village, in separate small hamlets, lived the very low castes of Parayas and Pulayas. Parayas were a small caste of basket and umbrella makers. Two or three households had a village right to serve all castes above them. Pulayas were until 1850 the agricultural serfs of Nayars, temple servants, and Brahmans (Buchanan, 1807: 370–372). As highly polluting castes, Pulayas and Parayas were theoretically forbidden to approach the high castes within a distance of sixty-four feet. They might not enter the "good" area of the village or walk on the main paths.

OTHER RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Muslims, called Mappillas, were concentrated in the Zamorin's kingdom, where they followed patrilineal descent. In 1931 they formed about 15 per cent of Kerala's population. Their presence dates from the ninth century, when Arab traders began to make converts, probably mainly from the Tiyyars and the coastal caste of fishermen. From the Arabs and from these converts there sprang a flourishing trading community which increased greatly in the fourteenth century (Logan, 1951, I: 192–197). The Zamorins derived a large measure of their power from the Muslims through taxes and naval support (Ayyar, 1938: 54). Muslims lived mainly in the ports and at inland trading posts on the banks of rivers. They were partly outside the village ranking system, which had its basis in differential land rights, and were theoretically outside the Hindu religious hierarchy. Nevertheless, Muslims were in some contexts accorded a rank ritually and socially between that of Nayars and Tiyyars.

3:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AW11 Kerala AW11
North Kerala Nayar

Nayar: North Kerala

The Nayars of North Kerala live between the Chandragiri and the Kora rivers. This area lay north of the Calicut kingdom and had been conquered by the Kolattiri kings at some period before the fourteenth century (Logan, 1951, I: 283; Innes, 1908: 57). It then disintegrated into the small kingdoms of Kolattunad, Kottayam, and Kadattunad. North Kerala was invaded from the Bednur kingdom of South Canara in the 1730's. It was later occupied by Muslim armies from Mysore between 1766 and 1792, after which it passed under British rule (Logan, 1951, I: 360, 399–473). This account deals with conditions before 1760, so far as these are known, and with the major changes of the nineteenth century.

Ecology

The mountains approach nearer to the sea in North Kerala than in Central Kerala. There are fewer stretches of lowland suitable for wet-rice cultivation, and gardens of fruits, nuts, vegetables, and spices on hillsides are more extensive. Since rice was the main subsistence crop, population density was lower than in Central Kerala. The houses of a village (*dēsam*) were scattered in gardens on hillsides surrounding a wet-rice flat in a valley. Villages were often separated by three to six miles of uncultivated scrub or jungle. Until the Mysoreans built roads after the 1760's, transport and communication by narrow mountain paths were difficult, especially in the heavy monsoons.

North Kerala had four major ports during the period of European trade—Cannanore, Tellicherry, Mahé, and Badagara (Hamilton, ed. 1727: 369–371). Pepper and other spices were exported from inland villages probably from Roman times, but villages were virtually self-sufficient for food until the mid-eighteenth century. After that time the Mysoreans' roads permitted greater import of goods both from the coast and from Mysore, and greater spatial mobility. In the nineteenth century cash-crop farming for export increased, as did imports of

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

collapsed and the old system of differential land-rights between Nambûdiris and rulers on the one hand and their Nayar tenants on the other has been seriously undermined. Yet even today Nayars remark with pride that their lineage has 'fathers' in the lineages of their former landlords and chiefs, while chiefs and royalty alike revere their Nambûdiri *genitors*, and boast that the blood of these Gods of the earth is running in their veins.

Part II. The Nayar *Tali*-Rite in North Malabar

North Malabar lies north of the Kora River, being the old kingdoms of Kolattiri, Kurumbrattiri, and Kadattunad. Except for the coast-towns expanded by Europeans, it is sparsely populated and mountainous; part of it is forest. Villages lie separated by hill ranges, usually as clusters of houses on the hillsides surrounding small wet paddy-flats in the valleys. This contrasts with South Malabar and Cochin, where the coastal plain is wider, paddy-land extensive, and settlement usually continuous between villages.

Perhaps because of its difficult environment, North Malabar did not before 1792 approach the degree of political centralization achieved in the central area. The Kolattiri Rajas, it is true, temporarily conquered Kottayam, Kurumbranad, and Kadattunad, but the area was never consolidated as was the Zomorin's kingdom. Within the small kingdoms, *nâduvaris* fought each other and rebelled against their Rajas, allying themselves with different rulers as suited their needs of the moment. Neighbouring *desavaris* sometimes fought each other within the *nâd*, while within the *desam*, *kudipaga* (lineage-feud) persisted till modern times.

Consistent with this lack of political centralization, high-class Nayars were not divided into sub-castes with administrative and occupational functions. Instead they had exogamous clans, dispersed between many villages. In Kottayam and Kolattunad the bulk of Nayars were Nambiars, independent land-owners owing only nominal allegiance to a chief. *Desavaris*, appointed by the Raja or the *nâduvari*, had administrative powers in their villages but belonged to the same sub-caste as other Nambiars. In most villages the land was divided between the Nayar property-groups as owners, Nayar tenancies being less common than in the south. *Nâduvari* lineages, however, usually owned the land in the whole village where they lived, employed Nambiar tenants as retainers, and claimed superior caste-rank, calling themselves Samantan Nambiars. Nambûdiri Brahmans are fewer in the north than in the south, especially since the Muslim invasions from Mysore in the 1760s, when many fled to Travancore. Those who remain live as landlords in widely separated villages, with local Nambiar lineages as retainers. The Nayar servant castes are spatially distributed as in the south. The lower polluting castes of manual workers are present in similar proportions, but Tiyyars and their washermen and barbers are matrilineal in North Malabar, patrilineal in the south.

The Nayar Kinship System. North Malabar Nayars, though trained in arms in the private gymnasia of their lineages, were not recruited as a permanent militia of the kingdom. Instead they cultivated their own lands with the aid of Tiyyar tenants, the serf castes being absent over most of the area. It seems largely because of this difference of occupation, North Malabar Nayars are virilocal: a wife moves on marriage to the ancestral house of her husband, and remains with him with rare exceptions till his death. Her children are brought up by their father and commonly return to their own lineage at puberty. A boy then begins to manage his *tarawâd* property under the direction of his *kâranavan*, while a girl is shortly afterwards married, from the lineage house, by common consent of her *kâranavan* and her father, often to the *kâranavan*'s son or to a maternal nephew of the father.

Divorce is permitted, but is rarer than in the south. Polygyny is rare, polyandry even traditionally forbidden. A cuckolded husband formerly cut off the hair of his wife and returned her to her lineage. The *genitor* has customary rights in and obligations to his children. In

8:Panikkar I-4,5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

Malayalam has an extensive
literature, and it has been developed almost entirely by the Nampūdiris and the Nāyars. The following essay is based on an examination of eighteenth-century literature. As far as it treats of present customs and ceremonies it is based on the personal experience and observations of the writer.

II.—THE VILLAGE ORGANIZATION OF THE NĀYARS.

A clear understanding of the life and customs of the Nāyars is impossible without an adequate idea of the strength of their village organization. In this connection it is necessary to make an important distinction at the very start. The village organization in Malabar is utterly unlike the village communities in British India, and therefore should not be confused with them.[1] Malabar has no *village community*: it has only a village *organization*. To make the distinction clearer: in British India, in general, there are communities grouped together in a village, generally owning land in common and dealing with other villages as units. But in Malabar individual property, in the ordinary legal sense, is universal, and the village organization comes in only for specific purposes such as the management of the temple affairs and, in olden days, for military training and mobilization.

Another distinction is that the Malabar village organizations include only Nāyar families, though in the same village there may be Christians, Ezhuvs, and Jews. For purposes of communal life other castes are outside the village organization. All these castes, except the Parayas, the Pulayas, and all those who were, till the abolition of slavery, in bondage to their masters, live side by side. Another point to remember in this connection is that Malabar villages are not like British Indian villages, built according to a plan. Each house in a Malabar village stands apart in a separate compound and in each compound generally there is a house. It might happen that the compound nearest a Nāyar's house is occupied by a Christian. But as far as the village organization is concerned the non-Nāyars do not exist.

Malabar in olden days was divided into ten or twelve states, each of which was ruled by a Rajah. These states were divided into *Nads* (countries); each of these *Nads* consisted of certain *Dēsams*; and the *Dēsams* were subdivided into *Amsas*. Later administrative division has abolished the first two to a great extent, though they survive in popular speech and in poetic language. But the *Amsas*, or villages, are wholly intact even now; indeed they form the unit of administration. Before the British conquest and the division of Nāyar country into three parts, British Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore, Nāyar society was built up on a feudal basis. Each of the *Nads* was under the control of a local magnate called *Nadu Vazhi* (the ruler of the *Nad*). He had criminal and civil jurisdiction and the right to claim

[1] Cf. Matthai, *Village Government in British India*. T. Fisher Unwin, 1915.

8:Panikkar I-4, 5 (no date) 1918 AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

valent among them also. The more one looks into these matters the more one becomes clear that in the unorganised and uneducated human mind, be it "civilised" or be it primitive, there is a horizontal stratification of the most contradictory ideas, which lie absolutely undisturbed in the ordinary course of life. In the mind of the ordinary man whose *forte* is not clear thinking, a great deal of intermingling of such ideas might take place. It is no uncommon sight to see a thoroughly Hindu-ised Nāyar who talks about Absolutism and Illusion, and believes in them, paying a *Kāniyān* to get the devil out of his little niece. This is, perhaps, the truth which lies midway between those who assert, like Dr. Frazer, that magic and religion are hostile and cannot be reconciled, and those who, like Dr. Marett, hold that in their origin they are the same, that it is in their character as looked upon by society they differ. The view I have maintained here is that religion and magic are different in their psychological and emotional effects and that Dr. Frazer is right when he says that they are at bottom hostile. But the almost universal coexistence of magic and religion is due to the attitude of society which tolerates all contradictions and insists only on their effect being for social welfare.

VII.—THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE NĀYARS.

Occupation.—The Nāyars are at present an essentially agricultural population. The vast majority of them are peasant proprietors owning small farms. Rice and coco-nuts are the chief things cultivated, though in North Malabar pepper and cardoman have also their share.

With regard to these matters the Nāyars have attained a certain stage of excellence. Their coco-nut estates are planted with a considerable amount of scientific skill and they are proficient in the industries which are allied to coco-nut cultivation; such as coir-matting, copra making and extraction of coco-nut oil. The extreme fertility of the land has made agricutural chemistry, as far as coco-nut and rice cultivation are concerned, a matter of secondary importance; and even to-day there are very few Nāyars who have studied the Western methods of agriculture.

As each Nāyar family generally lives in a compound of its own, coco-nut cultivation is generally in small farms. Extensive coco-nut plantations owned by the same man are very few. The position is much like that in England before the Enclosures. Even if all the land in a particular area is owned by the same person it is seldom enclosed and transformed into one large estate. On the other hand, they continue to be regarded as separate compounds and the houses on them are generally occupied either by Nāyar tenants or by Pulaya slaves.

The fact that Nāyar families live in garden houses is one of great significance. Horticulture is practised with great interest in all families, rich as well as poor. It is, in fact, very seldom that any Nāyar family uses vegetables bought from the market.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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Nayar

361 564 Habitations.

The Nayars, like other Malayali Hindus, are not lovers of towns, but generally live in detached houses, with large compounds and good gardens. The strict customs of caste purity and impurity in former times made them desert places where they were liable to be polluted by the members of very low castes. They generally select the site of a house either on the margin of a fertile valley or ravine with bright green fields of rice in front. The entrance to their compounds, which are often somewhat raised off the ground by laterite or mud walls, is at some little distance from the main house, and consists of a door in the centre of a strong gate-way, which is the first that attracts one's attention as the dwelling is approached. The gate is quaintly constructed, and the surroundings are exceptionally neat and tidy. It is also essential that a stair or a ladder should lead up to it from the bank of a green level paddy flat, reminding one of the days when security of life and property depended upon one's own ability to laugh a seige to scorn; when a Nayar house was his castle, and when at the gate-way were posted retainers to keep watch and ward against enemies. Seats for them to rest on, right and left, both outside and inside, a solid quaintly carved door and lintel, a room above approached by a ladder from inside, with windows, or openings whence shots were discharged on lawless intruders, and finally a thatched roof, complete the characterstics of a gate house. Permission to build such a gate house was a rare privilege and had to be obtained from the rulers, but with a change in the old order of things, this restriction has, like many others of the kind, ceased to exist. The plan and other details of the structure of a Nayar house are determined in strict conformity with the principles of the ancient Hindu science of architecture based on astrology. [1] A compound or garden is first selected and measured out into a square plot and is then divided into four parts by imaginary lines running lengthwise and breadthwise through the centre or middle of it. Either the north-east or south-west portion is chosen for the site of a house, the former being preferred to the latter. The south-east corner is generally set apart as the family burial-ground. There are again special spots selected for the well, tank, cow-shed, serpent grove and the family deity. The selection of the site for the house is

1. Chandrika.

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165

COMPARATIVE POSITION OF BIRTH AND DEATH RATES

		Average birth rate per year per 1,000 persons	*Average death rate per year per 1,000 persons*
1941-51	All-India	41.3	24.9
	Kerala	38.2	19.9
1951-56	All-India	41	25
	Kerala	38	17

SOURCE: NCEAR calculations based on Census data and corrected birth and death registration data.

1.18 In fact comparative data for the different States shows that the death rate in Kerala is the lowest in the whole of India. The death rate is lowest in Kerala, presumably because of the generally high standard of hygiene of the people of this area. The erstwhile States of Travancore and Cochin had long followed a progressive policy in the field of providing public amenities such as medical facilities, sanitation, etc. Since the standards of literacy as well as the average level of intelligence are fairly high in Kerala, with a more vigorous family planning programme it should be possible to bring down the birth rate within a shorter span of time than in many other parts of India.

Rural-Urban Breakdown

1.19 Only 13.5 per cent of Kerala's population lived in urban areas against 17.38 per cent of all-India, according to the Census of 1951. This difference seems to have narrowed down during the last decade, the proportion of urban population in Kerala having risen to 15.03 per cent by 1961, while it rose to only 17.84 per cent for the whole of India.[1]

1.20 The villages in Kerala are unique in size. According to the Census of 1951 as high as 13 per cent of villages had a population exceeding 5,000 persons against only 0.38 per cent of such villages in the whole of India. However, there are some redeeming features which prevent the countryside from presenting an appearance of over-congestion. The villages in Kerala are of a different type than is usual in the rest of India. The homesteads are generally not clustered together but are dotted almost all over the countryside. This spread out of population keeps living conditions healthy and clean in the rural areas.

STATE INCOME, OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION AND LABOUR PRODUCTIVITY

1.21 The State income of Kerala in 1955-56 has been estimated at Rs. 351.6 crores[2] at the current prices (Table 3). This is roughly 3.4 per cent of the National Income of India (Rs. 9,980 crores) for the same year. For an area which is only

[1] It may be noted that this is only a broad conclusion as the definitions of urban areas in Census of 1951 and of 1961 are not identical.

[2] *See* Appendix 2 for details.

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

Ghats, the height of which varies between five and over eight thousand feet.

Before 1957, when the new State of Kerala came into being with the reorganization of the Indian States, the area included the large Madras district of Malabar, the French possession of Mahe, and the princely State of Cochin amalgamated with that of Travancore. The respective capitals were Calicut (today Kozhikode), Ernakulam, and Trivandrum, the French possession being limited to the town bearing the same name as itself.

All rivers in Kerala, except those of the more elevated taluk of the Wynaad, run from east to west, cutting the coastal strip into sections. Inland, however, vast stretches of practically stagnant water, comparable to lagoons, known locally under the name of backwaters, extend down the whole length of the State, affording uninterrupted communication.

Geologically, Kerala is a low tableland of red laterite and clay, fringed by a coast of alluvial formation. Laterite, from the name given to it by Dr Buchanan in 1800, is really a soil of decomposed gneiss, from which the Western Ghats are made. When dug up and left to the action of sun and rain, only the skeleton of hard material remains, sponge-like in appearance, from which blocks of building material are cut. It is not very resistant or long-lived, and gradually disintegrates into a red type of gravel, more or less finely granulated.

The resultant soil or loam is a well-balanced mixture of clay and sand, admittedly poor in organic matter, but well-suited to the special types of crops which have given Kerala its wealth. Thus rice, coconuts, pepper and betel, arecanuts, jack fruits, mangoes and cashews, do extraordinarily well in it, helped as they are by the damp, warm climate constant throughout the year. There are two monsoons in Kerala, the south-west monsoon of the summer, which is the principal one, and the north-west monsoon of the autumn which, lately, often fails.

In appearance, the landscape of Kerala varies very little from the coastal line to the towering peaks of the Western Ghats. Along the beach of fine sand, coconut trees in an unending perspective, raise their gently waving palm leaves in a manner reminiscent of the South Seas and of Ceylon. Jack fruit trees and mangoes behind them, being of a darker coloured foliage, give depth to the romantic scene. It is among these that the houses of the inhabitants of Kerala are to be found. Unlike the rest of India, human habitations are not grouped together here in villages and towns. Each stands isolated from its neighbours, in a garden-like compound surrounded by a stout fence of brambles or of

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Tiyas
Thandans

to the four eldest boys to begin with. That was twenty seven years ago, and she was forty six now. Innayakkan, the last husband, had joined his brothers later, when he was twelve and with their consent, but there had been no ceremony.

Very soon after this, Iyyer, the third husband, finding conditions too difficult in Kerala, did what many Tiyas had done since time immemorial; he emigrated to Ceylon, where he worked as a railway coolie. Kalyany had remained with Koppan, Pangoda, Ponan and Innayakkan, and she had had five children by them. Then Ponan died of tuberculosis, ten years after the wedding, aged twenty five. Fifteen years ago, the two eldest men had also left for Ceylon and sent Iyyer back to look after their wife. He had returned, had taken up his former profession of toddy tapping, and was her only real husband now. She had had three more children by him, Balakrishnan was the second and the only boy. There had been no news at all of Koppan and Pangoda, and she presumed that they were dead. Inayakkan had run away from home some time back and had never been heard of again; he was also presumed dead. With Iyyer and herself lived Kesheran, her second son, two unmarried girls and the three last children. Work was still scarce, and pay meagre, so that Aiyappan, the eldest, had gone to Kozhikode (Calicut) in order to try and gain employment. His brother, Padmanapan, had done the same, but he had gone to Madras, on the east coast. She had been trying to help Balakrishnan find work all day: yesterday he had been given a job as a coolie, but today, he was unemployed.

Kalyany told me that she was related to the brothers of the Katukulangara *tarawad* whom I had interviewed at Kadavelur on the 27th of October. She was a half sister of Velu by another mother. I found this family particularly interesting, because it illustrated, more than any other Tiya one encountered so far, the ancient and persistant connection which the caste has with Ceylon. Their genealogy is given in Table 8.

Before going on to an account of my visits to Kammalans and other artisan families practising polyandry in Kerala, I would like to give here, together with the material that I collected about Tiyas, the description of a Thandan family that I went to see on the 25th of November 1949.

They lived in a large house, standing in a big garden of coconut trees, arecanut palms, plantains and jacks. It was situated at the cross-roads of the Nilambur valley track and the highway to Pattambi, quite close to Shoranur.

I began by interviewing the matriarch of the household, an old lady of eighty, called Kali, the widow of five husbands. The household and

[Text Continues on P. 191]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 A Wll Kerala A Wll
Thandans
Kammalans

*595 so, but that they would not tell me. He was twenty five when he took
60 his fathers' sisters' daughter, Janeki, to be his wife.
582 I found Kali difficult to interview. She was old, very old by Indian
*595 and Kerala standards, and quite plainly showed her displeasure at being
601 bothered. Consequently I went over to asking Paragnoden for the in-
115 formation that I wanted, but he seemed extraordinarily ignorant and lazy. Finally, it was from a neighbour who was called in, that most of what I learned was gathered. It is from what these combined informants told me, and from what my guide and interpreter knew about the family, that I was able to piece the genealogy together. It will be found in Tables 9 and 10 herewith. I have been obliged to put it on two tables because of the size of the first generation.

*595 On Table 9, Vali and Lakshmi are shown. Now deceased, they were
601 sisters of the five brothers. They live to be fifty and fifty three respectively. Personal names and *tarawad* names were not always known by the informants, and in these cases, I have been obliged to put in interrogation marks – except where a *tarawad* is qualified as being one from the village of Palappuram, for this at least gives a geographical location.
582 It is to be noted in Table 9 how advanced in age are some of the un-
933 married young people, but then Thandans do marry late in Kerala, differing in this from other parts of India. The congenital idiot, Narayan, son of Paragnoden, was at his father's side during the interview.

*595 This completed my general study of Thandan and Tiya (Thiyya) polyandry. However, before this date occurred, I had already started visiting Kammalan houses to find out what the polyandry of this caste of artisans was like.

On the 12th of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi in the Walluvanad taluk, near the borders of Palghat taluk, to interview the Tiyas I had seen there ten years before. I was accompanied by two interpreters and a guide. We were not successful in finding the Tiya family we sought, as it had moved elsewhere in the intervening years, but we found a blacksmith living on the same bit of property, as I have already reported
*595 earlier (see p. 178). Before I give an account of this family's polyandry,
564 however, I would like to describe that of a household of goldsmiths,
[326] living close by, as, hierarchally, these craftsmen come before their fellow blacksmiths in the Kammalan caste.

In the language of Kerala, Malayalam, they are called *Tatham* (see p. 173) and they are among those who are said to have gone to Ceylon
•[361] in the days of the Perumals. They are not a wealthy group of people, and this became apparent at once when we entered their compound near

7 [i.e. 22, 20, 12 & 10 yrs. old -- Analyst]

[TEXT Continues on p. 194]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalahs

the cross-roads of the main Shoranur-Palghat highway of the road to Lakkidi, a few furlongs down the latter, on the right hand side. In contrast to the Thandan houses to which we had been, although not to the Tiya (Thiyya) houses of the Cochin labourers, the place looked rather miserable. It was a thatched palm-leaf house, standing on a red laterite loam platform, in the middle of some paddy fields. There were signs about that these Tathans were not only goldsmiths but that they now also practised agriculture. There was paddy lying about to dry in heaps in the yard, and there were stalls for bullocks at the back.

We interviewed a man called Raman and his brother Kochen, aged fifty four and fifty two respectively, who lived polyandrously with their wife, Kurumba, forty five years old. They seemed rather impressed by us, and were reluctant to speak. They observed the outward forms of hospitality, however, and presented us with fresh coconuts for us to drink the milk.

Raman told us that the household's name was Padijarehil, meaning "Western", and that it was part of five others which constituted the Uzhugaparekil *tarawad*. The latter was *makkathayam*, as we expected, and exogamous, as was also their *kiriyam*, although, here too, they only observed the rule in matters which concerned those members of it whom they knew. They had two and a half acres of paddy fields, in simple *verumpattam* lease from a Nambudri Brahmin janmi called Kodiertha-mana. For this they paid five rupees a year and handed in a part of the harvest – five hundred *parahs*, I have in my notes, three hundred from the *kanni* crop and two hundred from the *magaram*.[1] As it was an ordinary *verumpattam*, there was no renewal fee. They had a deficit this year of forty *parahs* (roughly lbs. 866¼) and they were wondering what they could do to make it good. Last year they had done "other work" (presumably such as hiring themselves out as labourers) in order to raise the cash needed to compensate for the deficiency in grain, and they might do the same thing now. When I asked them what kind of goldsmith's work they did, they laughed and said that they had given this up; how could they carry on with their traditional profession, they asked, when the sovereign which was once worth Rs. 25 had reached Rs. 77?

Raman and Kochen had had eleven children in their polyandrous

[1] This again seems too much. It is equivalent to lbs. 10,830 (1 Palghat *parah* = 10 *edengalis* = 40 *nalis* (1 *nali* = *tolas* 21⅝ in s. Walluvanad and Palghat) = 866,40 *tolas*; as 40 *tolas* = 1 lb. in s. Malabar, 1 *parah* = 866,40 : 40 = 21⅝ lbs and 500 = lbs 10,830).

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kammalans

thayam was followed and caste, or rather sub-caste, endogamy. There was more polyandry in the second generation of this family than in any other encountered so far. I found that Kunji was married to two husbands; Lakshmi, aged thirty three, to four husbands; Paru, thirty, to two husbands; Sita, twenty eight, to three husbands; and Narayani, already mentioned, to two husbands. All the respective husbands were brothers, and only fraternal polyandry was practised. The women had all married early: Kunji and Yakshmi at sixteen, Paru at fifteen, Sita a bit later at twenty four, and Narayani, the youngest, at eighteen. The reason for which Sita had married later was that she had been taken by the three younger husbands of her elder sister Lakshmi, after seventeen years of marriage with the latter. Only Kanju, the eldest, had remained with Lakshmi, and Raman, Narayan and Krishna had decided to marry Sita jointly, when they found that she was not getting married and showed no inclination to do so outside. The two younger brothers of the Mudrikkelparampil household, Raman and Kunyuni, were eighteen and sixteen when they took Nani to wife; she was now twenty. Polyandry certainly did not look as if it were dying out in the blacksmith's caste, judging, at least, from this striking example.

The property upon which the family lived was worth four thousand rupees. It consisted of the house, some agricultural implements and a paddy field. The people were tenants of the Nambudri Brahmin *janmi* Kodierthamana, and paid him the rent of a customary *verumpattam* nine rupees yearly, plus a renewal fee of thrice the rent every twelve years. Poreyn and Kunyuni were practising smiths, hence the implements we had seen on coming in, and Raman worked at the Metal Industries Ltd. in Shoranur, where we camped. They also cultivated the paddy field to produce some of the rice they needed themselves, although the yield was not very great. The genealogy is given in Table 12.

On the 15th of November, 1949, together with interpreter and guide, I visited a family belonging to the third sub-caste of the Kammalans, that of the carpenters or *Asari* (often pronounced *Ashari*). I heard that laterite-cutters called *Puri-asari* or "mud carpenters" were assimilated to these people, but that they only constituted a division of the sub-caste. They are also reputed to be polyandrous; I did no have an opportunity, however, to verify this myself.

The *Asari* whom I saw that day, lived at Palappuram, a village on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, some few miles east of Ottappalam. The compound of the house was by the side of the road on the right, just beyond the village, coming from the west. It was a very poor looking

[Text continues on p. 199]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Kammalans
Kolla-Kurups

and boys had preference over girls in this matter, but the latter could inherit if there were no male heirs.

The plot of land upon which the house was built was leased to the family as a sort of *kudiyiruppu*. It cannot be called a fully orthodox one, since Krishnan said that he had paid fifty rupees to the former resident, a coolie of the Ertachan caste (low caste Nayar), twenty three years ago when he took over from him, and another fifty rupees to the *janmi*, a Nambudri Brahmin called Manjalata Nambudri. Since then, rent had been fixed at eight annas and six pies a year, but he had not paid it for the last two years, he said, because nobody had asked him to do so! He made his living all right as a brazier, although it was not a very lucrative profession.

Having been to polyandrous families of the four sub-castes of the Kammalans, I next went on to investigate the polyandry of their associated artisan sub-castes, of which six were reliably reported to practise it. I began with the *Kolla-kurups* or shampooers, masseurs and leather shield makers. To these are assimilated also the *Vil-kurups* or bow makers, but I did not have the opportunity to see any. There are a subdivision of the main sub-caste, on the basis of speciality, as the *Puri-asari* are of the regular *Asari*.

On the 20th of November, 1949, I went to the house of a *Kolla-kurup* near Palappuram. This town is on the main Shoranur-Palghat road, east of Ottappalam, just before reaching the cross-roads of Lakkidi. We left the car on the highway, and proceeded on foot to the south of it, along a narrow, winding path which took us past luscious, green paddy fields lined with coconut trees, to a largish house, built of clay and laterite but thatched in the usual way, standing on an elevated piece of ground, like a platform. There was a gate to pass through, and as we went in we saw members of the family sitting about on a kind of rough, dried-clay verandah running round the walls of the building.

There were quite a lot of them, and they were all very gay and noisy. They started singing at the sight of us, and, laughing and shouting, made a considerable fuss of us. The contrast to the rather dismal atmosphere of the other houses that we had visited was very marked. After my guides and interpreters had somewhat quietened the children, we managed to speak to a man called Shankaran, aged thirty six, who was the eldest living male member of the family's second generation. With him were his wife and children, as well as his twenty five year old sister, Kalyany. None of the people wore anything from the waist upwards, and only a piece of cotton cloth covered the lower part of their bodies.

[Text continues on P. 206]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949)1963 AWll Kerala AWll

Holla-Kuraps
Tol-kollans
Kanisans

any rent for it, but on the contrary, received payment as shampooers and masseurs of their landlord. Fees for those services were, on an average, twelve annas per session, and they received the money at regular intervals from seven to fourteen or twenty one days. Four times a year (every "season"), they were also entitled to two bags of rice, food, oil for massage and a bath(?). (I am not quite clear as to what the latter item stands for, but this is what I have in my notes.)

On the 26th of November, 1949, I visited a *Tol-kollan* household, at Meitenadesam, near Ottappalam. The name of this sub-caste means literally "skin-workers", and its members are leather-workers and cobblers. The house in which this family lived was the most miserable of all those we had or were still to see. It stood in the coconut groves on the outskirts of Ottappalam, and we went there on foot. It was a broken down construction of woven palm leaves and mud walls and the thatch on the roof was in bad condition. An old lady called Kurumba (see Fig. 14), sat just outside the front door, bare breasted and with enlarged holes in the lobes of her ears so that she could accomodate the sizeable gold lumps which are inserted here in Malayalam fashion. With her was her elderly daughter, Kunji, who received us. She was very polite and insisted on offering us some fresh coconut milk.

When we asked her about polyandry, she scoffed at the idea and said that in her family at least, the practice had been given up already in the generation of her father and mother. The men quarrelled too much about the common wife, she said, and besides, the women resented it and did not want it any more. There were members of her sub-caste who were still polyandrous, but as they were few and far between it would not be easy to locate them.

Under the circumstances, it seemed useless to make out a genealogy of these people, and I did not have time to look for a polyandrous *Tol-kollan* family elsewhere.

From this house, in the evening of the same day and with the same interpreters and guides, I went on to the home of some *Kanisans* or astrologers, who are also known as *Panikkars* locally. Theirs was a better dwelling, standing hidden in a thick grove of plantains and coconut trees well shaded and pleasant. We were received by a man called Ramankuti, thirty five years old, who offered us some chairs to sit on and very readily answered our questions.

He told us that his household bore the name of Pellarmangalam, and that his *kalarikel* was similarly called. It appeared that *Kanisans* do not have *tarawads* either, and that their patrilineal clans are called "gymna-

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Kanisans
Manans

564 siums" too – for what reason, I could not find out; I could see no rela-
614 tion between astrology and a gymnasium. Like the *Kolla-kurups*, they also had *kiriyams* which were exogamous as the *kalarikels* were; the
[428] informant's matrilineal clan was called Manga. Inheritance was *mak-kathayam*.

* 595 The family living in the house here, was divided into two sections.
601 The first, of which Ramankuti was the eldest, consisted of himself and his brother, Ticheri, three years younger than him. Their father, who was now dead, had successively had two wives, Lakshmi and Kalyany, both of them still alive and living in the house; the first section was descendant from the first wife, while the other was issued from the second. Kalyany had had six children, of which, Paru, aged thirty, was the eldest; there were four brothers, Pachu, Shanghuni, Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan, and a younger daughter called Nani, aged twelve. The interesting part of the organization was that the two sections had both contracted polyandrous marriages: Ramankuti and Ticheri with one wife, Madhevi aged twenty eight: their four half brothers with Devaki, twenty three years old. Both women were from other *kalarikels*, the first from Kangal and the other from Kavalapara. They all lived in the same house, however, with Nani, only Paru having married Krishnan of Kutiparli *kalarikel* and having gone off to live with him. Paru had three children with Krishnan, as did Madhevi with the informant and his brother. The four brothers had only one little daughter, aged one year, with Devaki. The genealogy, as it was dictated to me, is given in Table 16.

* 595 Ramankuti told me that he and Pachu were the fully-fledged astrol-
[191] ogers of the family. Kumaran and Gopalkrishnan were studying the art. Ticheri did odd jobs as a labourer, and Shanghuni was employed as a
[420] workman in the local match factory. The house that they all lived in was rented on a *kudiviruppu* lease for which they paid eight annas a year to the *janmi* of the land upon which it stood, a Nambudri Brahmin called Totapai Mana Nilakanda Nambudripad.

564 On the 22nd of November, 1949, I went to Lakkidi to visit the house
[296] of a *Manan*. These people are washermen and barbers, and they play
[305] an important role in Kerala as it is they and they alone who can wash
[535] the polluted clothes of menstruating Nambudri Brahmin and Nayar women. But they are also dancers in the temple on festive occasions.

● 361 We found the house for which we were looking, in the actual village
351 of Lakkidi, in the vicinity of the railway station, near the river. It was a moderately large, well-to-do building, standing isolated in a large compound, in which clothes had been laid out to dry on the ground.

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 210]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWll Kerala AWll
Panans

853 could see, was obviously a way of circumventing the difficulty of adequate nourishment, something to which a great majority of the mothers in the vast multitudes of Asia habitually resort.

*595 [868] [126] Father Korappan was away working, and he had taken twelve year old Krishna with him as an apprentice, so I was not able to photograph the whole family. But I obtained a picture of Sita with Kumaran at her breast and Chami and Narayan sitting next to her, which I give here in Fig. 15. The genealogy is in Table 18.

564 614 [428] Where *tarawads* were not known, Sita gave me the name of the village. From what she told me, the clans were patrilineal, inheritance was *makkathayam*, and exogamy was the rule, also in the *kiriyams*. Her husband's matrilineal descent group was called Walleananad. The house

*595 [429] was leased as a *kudiyiruppu* for which they paid a yearly rent of twelve annas to the *janmi*, Eranur Mana Narayan Nambudripad. They had been fifteen years at this place, and had come from about a furlong away where they used to reside before. This awakened my curiosity, and I enquired how this had happened.

Sita told me that her husbands originally lived in the other house, because it was the *tarawad's* headquarters. The name Kundilpadam which it bore meant "low field", and Vellarkaden which was the name of their present house, was just the appellation by which their new dwelling was known. Her husbands' father was the youngest of a pair of brothers, and they had both taken wives to themselves and had not lived in polyandry. Their offspring, her husbands and their father's elder brother's children, had continued to live together, and they, Panju and Korappan, had married first, twenty seven years ago. Then, twelve years later, the cousins had also got married, and, in order to make place for them, Sita and her surviving husband, Korappan, being the junior members, had moved away to another residence, the one where they lived at present.

[601] I made the genealogy of the neighbouring household as the informant gave it to me. It is shown here in Table 19. Two brothers, Panju and Raman, respectively aged forty six and forty, lived polyandrously with a common wife called Cherona, thirty three years old. They had four children, of whom none were married, since they were still too young.

● 361 On the 21st of November, 1949, I went to Palarmanpalam, a cluster of houses on the road between Ottappalam and the Lakkidi railway station, about a mile before the latter is reached. The object of our visit was to see a *Pulluvan* household, that is of herbalists and *nag* snake worshippers, a sub-caste associated to the artisans.

564 959 971

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 214]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AWII Kerala AWII
Pulluvans

We found the house, which was a small one, in a grove of plantains, surrounded by tapioca fields. A man named Komon, aged twenty nine, met us and took us onto the neat verandah of the building which was constructed in the usual Kerala style. He told us that the name of his household was Putanpunakkil, meaning "new house", and I made out the genealogy of his family, as shown here in Table 20.

His elder brother, Raman, aged thirty three, had died recently, he said. He had had two younger sisters too, Chimdevi and Narayani, both of whom were also dead, the eldest at fifteen and the youngest at twelve. He and his elder brother had been married first polyandrously to a woman called Kalyany, for four years. Their father had found her for them, from the village of Churumudacheri. They had had a daughter by her, Ittiyadi, who was now eleven.

Kalyany, it seemed, had never really settled down in polyandry, and had always said that she did not like having two husbands. She wanted to stay alone with the eldest, Raman, but the latter did not accept. As he persisted in this attitude, in spite of her insistence that she have him all to herself, she eventually ran away, back to her parents' home, leaving the daughter with the brothers. That was seven years ago, and their father had immediately provided them with another wife, Kunji, from Manar village. She was twenty at the time, and had been married earlier, at the age of fourteen, to two brothers, Velu and Aiyappan of Tirumatankodu village. She did not get on with these two men and wanted to leave them. When Komon's father chose her for him and his brother, she left her married home, and the men, quite exceptionally, allowed her to take away the boy they had had with her, called Paramesuram and who was now aged ten. Kunji herself was now twenty seven years old and she had had three children with her new husbands, two boys and a girl. I could see that she was expecting another child shortly (in two months time, they told me).

There appeared to be no *tarawads* with these people, and village names were used instead for the patrilineal clans, which were exogamous. There were *kiriyams*, also exogamous, and inheritance was *makkathayam*. The sub-caste was reputed to allow marriage of brothers and sisters; the Gazeteer mentions this on p. 133. When I asked Komon about it, he protested that it was calumny and that they had never done such a thing. In my opinion, the reputation wrongly based on insufficient evidence, comes from the fact that these people form a very small group and those persons who are of the same generation use classificatory kinship terms which are apt to make it appear that "sister" mar-

[TEXT CONTINUES ON P. 216]

6:Spate N-4 (no date)1954 AW1 India
Kerala AW1

161 Malabar, Cochin, and Travancore respectively 14, 23, and 27% in 1921–31, 11, 18, and 19% in 1931–41. The decrease in rate seems to be associated with later marriage. Females outnumber males in Cochin (1042:1000) and in both Cochin and Travancore the proportion of unmarried females over 15 years old is several times greater than that of India as a whole—in 1941 Cochin had 172 per mille and Travancore 107 against an All-India rate of 36. In Cochin also the proportion of children under 10 had been stable in the last two Censuses.[47] The rate of increase, however, turned upwards again in 1941–51, which added to Travancore-Cochin 1,772,264 souls—an increase of 23·6% compared with an *Indian* average of 13·4. Population is now **9,280,425** with a density of **1015** on 9155 sq mls.

161 311 The situation is grave; on the 1931 figures Kuriyan calculated that taking a liberal view of the potentialities of 'culturable waste' only another 2,000,000 souls could be supported. Holdings are extremely small—96% under 10 ac., 87% under 5, 38% less than 1; and 5 ac. is regarded as the minimum for a family to live in reasonable comfort.[48] In Cochin the total area per person in 1941 was 0·67 of an acre, of cultivable land 0·36, of land actually cultivated 0·29; and the rice grown is sufficient to feed the people for only 7 out of 12 months.[49] During the war the Cochin and Travancore governments prided themselves, with some justice, on the efficiency of their procurement and rationing, but the ration was minimal even by Indian standards. As we have seen, agriculture is in many respects extremely intensive; yet in many areas there is a slack season from May through August, and this coincides with the slack season in sea-fishing owing to the stormy monsoon.

Diversification and expansion of agriculture are thus urgently necessary. But the density on cultivated area in the lowland is now at least 2250, and there is here very little land available for expansion on the most optimistic view imaginable. Various plans exist for irrigating perhaps 100,000 ac., mainly in the foothills; but these will not go very far, and it is difficult to see where the 15,000 ac. allotted to jute in 1950 can be fitted in. Even in the foothills there are well over **1000** persons to the cultivated square mile. Here, however, there is perhaps some room for diversification by expansion—perhaps of poorer crops on the poorer soils. Gram, soya, and other pulses, fodder crops, and buckwheat are suggested by Kuriyan, together with more tapioca and fruit. Other occupations may play an ancillary role in relieving pressure, but their scope is limited.

361 As for settlement patterns, the extreme density of population (as in Bengal) produces a close stipple of habitations; there are no grouped villages (other than mere thickening of homesteads) except in the tran-

[47] 1941 Census, Vol. XIX (Cochin), 18–24; the discussion is largely based on Cochin figures since this, by exception in 1941, is an excellent report.
[48] *Ibid.*, 31; Kuriyan (1938), 140, where 8–10 ac. is given as the 'economic' holding.
[49] 1941 Census, Vol. XIX, 31.

6:Spate N-4 (no date)1954 AWI India
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sitional areas—Comorin, Shencottah, Palghat, parts of Malabar. The importance of food-producing trees (coconut, areca, plantain, jackfruit) fits in with this: they are grown in the house compounds, so that the actual dwelling-space subtracts hardly anything from the cultivation-space, while

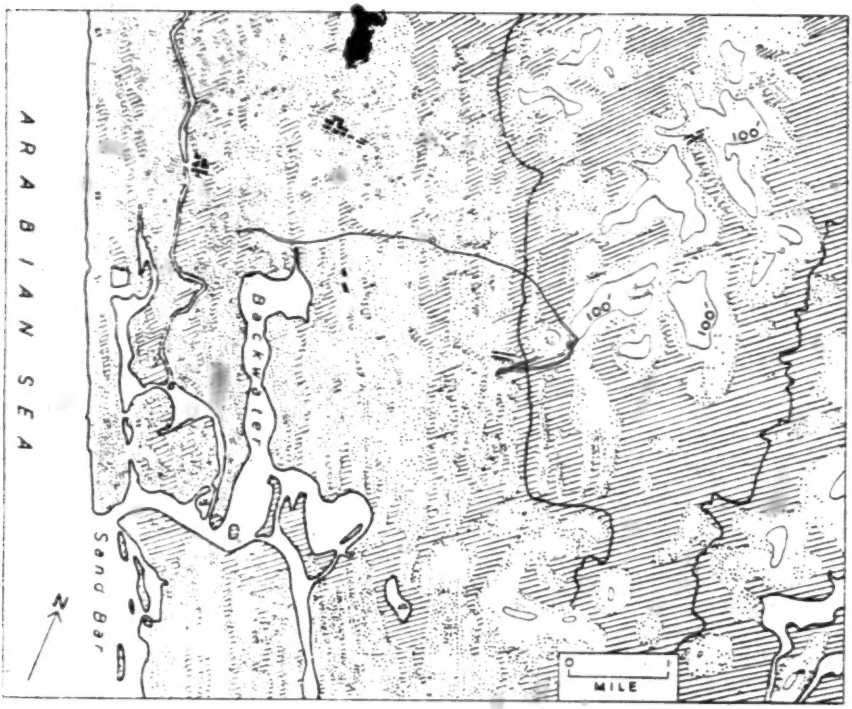

Fig. 122.—KERALA: COASTAL SETTLEMENT. 40 mls N of Cochin town. Dots, habitations; shaded, paddy. Note contrast between linear settlement on beach-ridges (under coconut) in W and ring settlement around lateritic rises in E. SOI 58 B/2; courtesy SOI.

at the same time the compounds ensure that the 'village' is loosely built, and may indeed spill all over the village lands. (Fig. 122.)[50]

Along the coast there is a marked linear tendency, houses and coconuts on the sandy ridges with their fresh ground-water, paddy in the lows. Inland the lateritic topography exercises a marked effect, settlement being strung out along valley-flanks or interfluves or forming a complete ring around the rises. (Fig. 123.)

[50] The 14th and the 20th centuries tell the same tale. "Mulaybar, which is the pepper country, extends for two months' journey along the coast. . . . there is not a foot of ground but what is cultivated. Every man has his own orchard, with his house in the middle and a wooden palisade all round it." (Ibn Battuta, *Travels in Asia and Africa, 1325–1354*, trans. H. A. R. Gibb (1929), 231–32). Along the 40 miles from Quilon to Trivandrum one is never out of sight of habitations or foot-travellers; G. Slater, *op. cit.*, 172.

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Towns

369 439 The towns of Kerala are for the most part either ports or crossing-points on the backwaters. There is virtually no indigenous maritime tradition, but from very early times spices attracted traders from E and W: Arabs, Graeco-Romans, Chinese.[51] With the Discoveries the Malabar coast became the scene of a fierce struggle between the Portuguese and their Muslim and European rivals. Relics of the era of European conflict are the tiny French settlement of Mahé (26 sq mls, poptn (1941) 14,092) and the exclaves of former British territory at Cochin itself and in Travancore

361 311

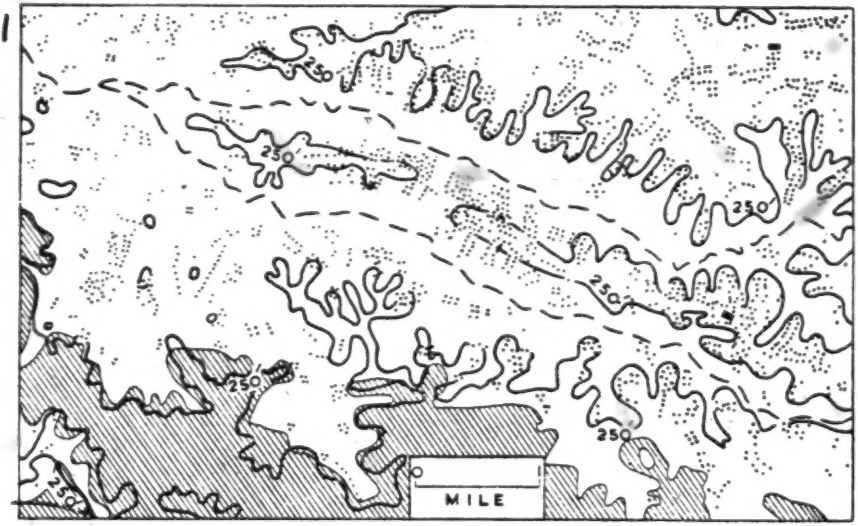

Fig. 123.—KERALA: INLAND SETTLEMENT. 5–10 mls SE of Palghat town; lateritic foothills in approach to Palghat Gap. Dots, habitations surrounded by groves; shaded, forest; blank, cultivation; broken lines, seasonal streams. SOI 58 B/10; courtesy SOI.

at Anjengo and Quilon (Tangasseri), which last had an area of 99 acres!

369 439 In Malabar Dt Tellicherry (36,320) exports most of the Coorg coffee and some pepper and copra; Calicut (158,724) has a similar trade but is more important administratively. Both ports are mere roadsteads, ships lying two or three miles offshore and lighters working from one or two piers, but at Tellicherry the shelter of offshore reefs enables some traffic to be carried on during the monsoon.

369 Cochin is far more important: it really consists of two adjacent towns, ex-British Cochin (26,320) and Cochinese Cochin or Mattancheri (53,346). Cochin is in fact the oldest European settlement in India; on Christmas

[51] On the Chinese shipping, see Ibn Battuta, *ed. cit.*, 235–6.

6:Spate N-4 (no date)1954 AW1 India
Kerala AW11
Laccadives AZ4
Maldives AZ5

Day 1500 Cabral arrived, and from then until the Dutch supplanted them in 1663 the Portuguese were in alliance with the rulers of Cochin against the Muslim Zamorin of Calicut. The port has considerable locational advantages: it is central on the backwaters, the Palghat Gap lies about 125 miles (by rail) to the NE, and it is about 300 miles nearer Aden and Durban than is Bombay. It may even rival Colombo as a transit port, as a call at Cochin adds only 40 miles to the Aden-Fremantle run.[52] The development of the modern port was for long impeded by its curious political situation; it lies on a breach in the long spit separating the great backwater from the sea, but while the major installations and the approaches lie in what was British territory, the inner harbour—in which much of the trade is carried on—is in Cochin state, and much of the backwater was Travancorean. Real development—including the cutting of a channel through the bar across the natural breach, and much reclamation—began only in 1920–23; later a 3-mile approach channel was dredged to a width of 450 and a depth of 37 ft, so that the inner harbour is now accessible to any ship which can pass Suez. Rail and road bridges cross the backwater, and a large airport has been built on reclaimed land; the old metre line to the SIR through the Palghat has been changed to BG. The volume of trade increased from 450,000 tons in 1920 to about 1,250,000 in 1950, while the number of ships using the port has more than trebled. Normally rice from Burma and Indo-China formed two-fifths in bulk of the total trade; mineral oil is also a major import. The exports are the usual Kerala ones: coconut products, especially coir and copra, tea, rubber, cashew nuts. Across the backwater is Ernakulam (46,790), capital of Cochin, with important soap factories, the largest owned (naturally) by Tatas: rice milling, as at Mattancherri, is also important. Trichur (57,524), the largest town of Cochin, has cotton spinning and weaving mills and tile factories; it shares with Palghat (55,160) command of the gap.

Travancore is less urbanised than Cochin, but Trivandrum (**186,931**) is the capital of Travancore–Cochin state. Alleppey (**116,278**) and Quilon are ports of ancient fame now decayed; mere roadsteads, they still carry on a considerable backwater traffic. Alleppey, protected by a mudbank, is slightly the better port, but Quilon has the advantage of its situation on the metre line from Trivandrum through the Shencottah Gap.

The Maldive and Laccadive Islands

These groups of coral atolls extend from the Equator to about 15° N, 180–300 miles from the Malabar coast. The Laccadives and Minicoy are attached to Madras, the Maldives (which have their own Sultan and constitutional government) to Ceylon: these affiliations represent historical accident merely.

[52] *Handbook of Commercial Information for India* (Delhi, 1937), 79; personal information from Sir Robert Bristow.

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Kerala AWII
Tamil AWI6
Marathi AWI2

rain. Above the rubber, tea extends to nearly 6000 ft, and indeed more than half of it is grown above 4000 ft; rainfall is usually 100–150 ins. It is noteworthy that over half the rubber is produced on Indian-owned estates, but only a small fraction of the tea.

As for hydro-electricity, the hills are dotted with falls and rainfall on the Wn flanks is everywhere high and reliable. So far the most important large development is at Pallivasal in Travancore (installed 21,000 kW, potential 36,000), which powers the aluminium smelters at Alwaye and also works pumps draining the flooded paddy-fields of Kerala. A project of great interest is that for utilising the great Periyar Reservoir (Fig. 150) for power. The Periyar headwaters have been impounded and are taken through the watershed by tunnel to irrigate the Suruli-Vaigai Valley in Madura; some 40,000 kW might be developed, and altogether the region has a potential of at least 200,000 kW.

The Wn flanks of the hills are too rain-swept to have much settlement except on plantations, forest camps, and power installations. In the E Kodaikanal, lying at 7000 ft on the Palnis, is a minor hill-station, noted for its mission schools and an old-established physical observatory.

Maharashtra

Maharashtra, the Maratha country *par excellence*,[5] may be taken as roughly coterminous with the main mass of the Deccan Lavas above the Ghats. To the N the Tapti Valley, flanked by typical lava plateaus but floored by alluvium, forms a transition to the central Indian scarplands; in the S, along the Malaprabha, there is another belt where Archaeans and lavas interdigitate and where cultural allegiance is divided between the Marathi and Kannada (Kanarese) languages. But to the E, in Hyderabad especially, the boundary of Marathi speech shows a striking accordance with the edge of the Lavas (Fig. 127); hence the division of the state into Marathwara and Telangana, a rare instance of official recognition of regionalism. This great area thus includes all central Bombay, the NW third of Hyderabad, and SW Madhya Pradesh (CP) as far as Nagpur.

The Terrain

It is a region of extraordinary physical homogeneity, in the gross at least, although (as Deshpande points out) detailed study would undoubtedly reveal significant differences in erosional features, soils, vegetation, and farming practice depending on the varying petrology of the lavas. The general slope to the E and SE is gentle: Poona lies at 1800 ft, and it is over 100 miles down the Bhima to the 1500-ft contour. From the Ghat culminations long tongues of higher ground (over 2000 ft) run E and divide the plateau

[5] The etymological connection of Maratha or Mahratta and Maharashtra, if any, is still controversial.

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THE COCHIN STATE.

WATAKANCHERY (TALAPILLI TALUK).

[*By S. Subbarama Aiyar, Christian College, Madras.*]

An absence of villages, as they are to be found in the east of the peninsula, is a characteristic of Malabar generally, including the States of Travancore and Cochin and the Malabar District of the Madras Presidency. The Malayalis are averse to having their houses congregated together. But the Taluk of Palghat is an exception. It is situated in the gap between the Nilgiris on the north, and the Palnis and other high ranges on the south, and is the natural line of communication between the west coast and the eastern plains, utilized by the South Indian Railway. All the villages in the Palghat taluk are designed in a manner that suggests that the original immigrants, coming from the east, were accustomed to an intense form of corporate life. They have a scientific and regular plan, and the description of any one of them will serve for all.

The Brahmans live in closely packed houses and their colony is called a '*gramam*' or '*agraharam*.' There is invariably either a temple at one end, or the streets of the *gramam* radiate in all directions from a temple in the midmost place. There are also wells in the street common to all the villagers. There is scarcity of water in summer in almost all the villages of Palghat as they are situated on a high level and rocky ground. The *gramam* is surrounded by the *tarai* in which all the other castes live. Artisans and agricultural labourers live there in houses built singly, but the weavers generally inhabit hovels built in rows. People of the same caste and profession congregate in particular blocks of the *tarai*. The *tarai* is occupied by the richest jammi as well as the poorest day labourer. The *tarai* has its own *kavu* or temple in which the low caste people conduct their worship. The *gramam* with its adjoining *tarai* is set up on rather elevated ground in the midst of paddy fields or on the slope of an adjoining hill so that every available acre of land may be cultivated. All houses in the *gramam* are built in the same way. From the street you step into a verandah whose extent corresponds to the whole width of the house; hence into a small room, the *neli*, to the right of which is a granary. The *neli* leads you into a rectangular hall, in the middle of which is a yard exposed to the sky. To the right of this is another big hall separated from the other by a long window crossed by beams. The store-room is on the street side of this, the kitchen on the back side. The kitchen has a verandah abutting on the garden. A cow-shed is erected at the other end of the garden. The house may or may not possess upstairs rooms; these usually adjoin the street.

In that part of Malabar in which Watakanchery is situated the general plan of the Palghat type of house is followed, with modifications, by the *Tamil* Brahmans. The Malayali Brahmans, known as Nambudris, and the Nayars, have their houses surrounded by big compounds. Entering from the compound you step into a portico which thrusts itself forward from the general structure of the house.

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342 From the portico, you go direct into a big hall in the middle of which is a big yard paved with granite; this yard is exposed to the sky. On one side of the hall—right or left—are situated two or three rooms, from one of which you are taken to upstairs rooms which are also connected with the portico. On the portico side of the hall are the kitchen, bath-room, and a few more rooms which are utilized for various purposes. In another place of the compound is an outhouse in which Brahmans are asked to perform worship.* Near this house is a tank and a well. The house itself possesses a well near it for the exclusive use of the inmates.

But educated Nayars now-a-days build their houses on different plans.

361 *Preliminary.*—Watakanchery is a Government division, rather than a true village, being marked out merely for convenience of revenue assessment. It stretches from east to west a distance of nearly four miles along the foot of a hill. A water-course which runs from east to west forms the northern boundary; the maximum distance from north to south is nearly a mile and a half. The whole area is 3,692·64 acres (nearly 5½ square miles). It is an area containing a few groups of houses intersected by paddy fields and "parambas," i.e., land on which paddy cultivation is not undertaken.

Watakanchery proper, or the town of Watakanchery, as it is called in the village accounts, is at the easternmost boundary of the Government village area and is the headquarters of the taluk containing all the public offices. Two tracts of land, one inhabited by Mappillas (Muhammadans) and another by Syrian Christians (locally known as Nasranees, i.e., Nazarenes) are included in the "town" of Watakanchery from the contiguous areas of the adjoining Government villages on the north and south respectively. Its area is 1½ square miles.

The Taluk of Talapilli contains 74 such "villages" divided solely for revenue purposes. In the "town" Brahmans live in great numbers, while the lower castes occupy the rest of the village area. This block I shall designate Watakanchery (T) and the whole area Watakanchery (V) in the following.

162 [779] 564 *Population.*—Watakanchery (T) has about 2,000 inhabitants; Watakanchery (V) about 4,000. Watakanchery (T) contains within its limits three religions—Hindus in the centre and Mappillas (Muhammadans) and Christians to the north and south, respectively. Among the Hindus the Brahmans form the majority in the "town," while there are a few "vocational" castes such as barbers, goldsmiths, etc., and a few Nayars. Though the term "castes" is in strictness to be applied to Hindus alone the Mappillas and Christians are regarded as two other castes. The Mappillas and the Christians cannot touch the Hindu caste-people without polluting them, while there are castes within the Hindu fold itself, such as carpenters, goldsmiths, masons, Cherumas (vide below), Eluvas, etc., who are [113] kept at a distance of a specified number of feet by the higher castes. There is a full and interesting study of the tribes and castes in Mr. L. K. Anandakrishna Iyer's "Cochin Tribes and Castes." The Hindus however form the majority.

[778] *[In Nayar houses, I am informed by Mr. L. K. Anandakrishna Iyer, this shrine is sacred to the cobra, to whom worship must be given by a Nambudri Brahman, as otherwise the Nayars are bitten. This belief may be the cause of the subjection imposed on Nayars by Nambudris, particularly in relation to Nayar women.—Ed.]

There are 440 houses in the "town," and more than double that number in the whole village. The statistics of births and deaths are kept separate for the part of the village outside the town and the town; they stand thus for the last five years:—

Years.	Village.								Town.							
	Births.				Deaths.				Births.				Deaths.			
	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Infants.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Christians.	Total.	Infants.
1910-11	93	10	23	126	60	8	5	73	33	86	17	23	126	54	21	5	80	39
1911-12	75	6	29	110	71	6	24	101	38	86	34	23	143	83	17	19	119	57
1912-13	40	7	7	54	33	4	6	43	17	72	24	17	113	66	13	18	97	48
1913-14	50	5	6	61	43	2	5	50	17	66	22	23	111	64	8	24	96	37
1914-15	35	3	4	42	20	...	6	26	6	49	27	17	93	29	6	12	47	15

"Infants" include all under the age of three.

The figures for the "town" can be taken as fairly accurate while those of the village cannot be relied on; for the village officers rarely take the trouble of entering the latter correctly, while every dweller in "town" is made to tender accounts of births and deaths on penalty, and these are also within the close purview of the village officers. Note especially the rate of infant mortality in both the town and village. Nearly 50 per cent of the deaths occur among the infants.* Muhammadans and Christians, who are invariably engaged in petty trade, are more numerous in the "town" than in the "village."

Parachcri.—The Pulayas (Cherumas and Paraiyas) in the State and of Malabar form a category by themselves. The State made an enquiry into their social and economic condition last year which I here utilize. There are nearly 300 Pulayas in the village. They are more or less serfs attached to the soil. They are agricultural workers only, and have no sort of proprietorship in the land. They are paid daily wages in kind and that in very low measures. The following is the daily rate:—Men 2 edangalis† of paddy per day; women 1½ edangalis of paddy, boys 1 edangali. In addition, 5 edangalis of paddy are given to men and 4 edangalis to women on certain festive days in the year, and once a year every male and female member of the family is presented with a pair of cloths‡ 2 yards and 3½ yards respectively by the master. The men plough, tend cattle, water the gardens, gather fuel, etc., while the women pluck the paddy seedlings to replant them, and do

* [The figures show an average infantile death-rate of 284 per 1,000 births for the area outside the "town," and of 336 for the "town"—Ed.]

† 10 Cochin edangalis = 1 para = 8 Madras measures. [Therefore 1 edangali of paddy weighs 2 lb.—Ed.].

‡ These cloths are nearly one yard wide.

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566 [462] work connected with the harvesting, separating the paddy from the stalks, etc. They are employed as a rule throughout the year by their masters; in leisure days however they are paid a little less than the stated wage.

[262] They take kanji (rice boiled in water) and toddy in the morning, toddy in the afternoon, cooked rice at night; they eat also fish and flesh. They behave well, are obedient and honest and loyal to their masters, very earnest about their work, but are completely illiterate. There are no schools for them in the village. [778] [796] They worship spirits in the shape of stocks and stones; and on the occasion of the festivals of their Gods and Goddesses they take a good dose of toddy and with drums and bugles and priests dance in the premises of the 'temple'.

564 There are sub-divisions among the Pulayas, Cherumas, Paraiyas, Nayadis, Malayas and others, who form separate castes among themselves and are restricted in their intercourse with one another.

[361] The Cherumas dwell in colonies of two or three families each, in low, small thatched huts near the land of their masters. It must be admitted that they are not treated properly by the high caste Hindus, though they form the backbone of agricultural labour in these parts. They are low paid and underfed and treated with contempt and sometimes with harshness by the other castes and their masters. It is a wonder that they still cherish obedience to their masters and earnestness in their work. There are a few who try to get rid of the yoke by running away, but the majority are contented and stay with their masters. They are experts in practical agricultural work and can face any sort of weather.

311 *Land and Occupation of land—*

	ACRES.
Area of wet lands	653·24
,, dry lands	937·21
,, lands watered by wells	...
,, common waste	18·81
Pasture other than common waste	33·94
Woods and forests	1,912·35
Fruit trees and scattered shade trees ...	301·48

312 There are altogether five public tanks in the village, most of which are not used for irrigation purposes at all, but for bathing, which is done by all at least once a day. There are no public wells. The cultivation of rice solely depends on the rains of the South-West Monsoon (June—September) which are copious, and of the North-East Monsoon in November. Every house however contains a well, from which water is drawn for drinking purposes and for watering the compound gardens in the summer. Water can be obtained at a very slight depth in most parts except at the foot of the hills. The sides of the tanks, usually not very large in size, are paved step by step with granite or laterite stones by which people can step down into the water for bathing. Water is lifted from the wells by means of pots for drinking purposes, but for watering gardens lifts of various sorts are used.

406 The water wheel, which costs about Rs. 35, is very rarely used except in *kol* fields where water has to be lifted out of the land.

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326 father is usually the teacher of his children in the hereditary [465] caste. A good workman can earn from about 8 annas to 10 annas per day.

438 *Village trade.*—Iron ware used for domestic utensils and for agricultural purposes is got from Trichur, the nearest town. There are however a few retail shops in the 'town.' All articles of consumption are bought from retail shops, the retail keepers themselves getting their wares from either Trichur or Palghat.

Rice is the principal commodity. Arecanut and to some extent pepper and bamboos form important items of sale. There is a fair half a mile to the north of the 'town' which meets once a week (every Wednesday), for the sale of arecanut and pepper. Merchants from various parts of Malabar and even from the east of the Ghats come here to buy arecanuts. Vegetables and sundries also are exposed for sale for the use of the villagers only.

361 The main metalled road which passes from Shoranur to Trichur 491 passes through the middle of the 'town.' Another road from the west touches the main road to the north of the 'town.' The Shoranur-Cochin Railway touches this place. The commercial town of Trichur is only ten miles to the south.

474 Co-operation in trading as well as in most other affairs is conspicuous by its absence. A Registrar of Co-operative Societies has recently been appointed in the State, and, I am told, gave one or two lectures in the place, but nothing came of it. I have hopes that a co-operative credit society will be started within a few years. I may mention that such credit societies have been opened in three places in the taluk and are receiving much help from the State. The co-operative principle as yet is not extended to trading, but with the development of knowledge and culture this may come.

Economic condition—

465 Statement showing wages (in *money*) for the whole State.

Workers.	Minimum.	Maximum.	Maximum in villages.
	Rs. A.	Rs. A.	Rs. A.
Carpenters	0 6	1 0	0 8
Blacksmiths	0 6	0 12	0 8
Masons	0 6	0 14	0 8
Bricklayers	0 7	0 12	0 8
Sawyers	0 10	1 0	Piece-worker.
Coolies –			
Male	0 4	0 10	0 6
Female	0 3	0 6	0 3
Boys	0 2	0 4	0 2

To Cherumans payment is made in kind (see above). Also wages are paid in kind to agricultural workers in the village area especially during the harvest season.

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796 beat the drums according to their 'science' for two or three hours. The figure of the God or Goddess is taken on the back of the middle elephant in the row. There is a display of fireworks at night.

794 A few temples in the village are managed by private people or Janmis, usually Nambudri Brahmans. Such temples have landed property managed by these Janmis who generally make use of the profits. Recently the Government has been trying to encroach upon the temple properties in its capacity of *melkoyma*; this is very much resented by the Nambudri Jánmis.

The common people as a rule have no part or lot in temple management or expenditure.

426 *State loans.*—Only one person in the village has borrowed from the Government a loan of Rs. 400 to be paid back in ten instalments of Rs. 40 each with interest at 5 per cent. The small landholders do not approach the Government for help; the mediocre landholders rent their land to others; while the few big ones have money of their own if they want to make any improvement. The fact is that agriculture is routine work with many people; no permanent improvements are thought of by the majority.

164 *Sanitary condition.*—Plague and tuberculosis are not heard of. Malaria only affects those who resort for agricultural purposes to the foot of the hills four or five miles east from the village. Attacks of cholera frequently occur among the local Muhammadans, who are as a rule quite insanitary, poor, living in low and ill-ventilated thatched huts or hovels; one is sick of the stinking smell when one approaches their huts. The local Christians, though equally poor, are better in this respect. The houses of most of the Brahmans and the majority of the Nayars are decent. The hovels of the lower castes and working men again are poor and insanitary. [341] As the houses are not built in rows, but separate, each having a compound big or small, epidemic diseases such as small-pox when they come at all are easily avoided. But the case is different in the quarters of the Muhammadans and Christians, who build their houses in streets.

The chief endemic diseases are fever, rheumatism, attacks of bile.

759 There are plenty of snakes in the village everywhere. One sometimes hears of deaths caused by snake-bites. There are however a few who pretend to cure snake-bites by incantations aided by medicines.

There is a Government free dispensary established in the 'town' where the Apothecary is a Sub-Assistant Surgeon. But most people resort to native (ayurvedic) physicians or vaidyans. Ayurveda, or the Hindu science of medicine, makes use of vegetable drugs both in the raw and dried state. The physician comes to your house and prescribes a certain mixture according to the directions laid down in his code which he has committed to memory in the form of verses. The drugs can be got from the market, or from a neighbouring hill, or even from one's own compound.

This science is handed down from father to son in certain families in Malabar who form even now some of the most distinguished native physicians in Malabar. Even in a petty village

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MALABAR DISTRICT.

GURUVAYUR (PONNANI TALUK).

[*By V. Lakshmana Aiyar, Christian College, Madras.*]

Preliminary.—Guruvayur is situated in the southern part of the Ponnani taluk, and is only 2 miles distant from the Arabian Sea. It is close to the backwater which extends from the northern point of the taluk to Cochin and Travancore. To the east it is only 3 miles distant from the State of Cochin. It is 14 miles away from the capital town of the taluk through which flows the chief river of Malabar. No forests can be seen throughout the whole taluk. The whole taluk is one red sandy mass with no waste lands, no mountains or hills. The chief crop of the village and perhaps of the whole taluk is coconut.

Malabar land tenure.—The system of land tenure that obtains in Malabar is entirely different from that of other districts. No doubt the theory that the Government is the legitimate owner of all the land in India and the people hold the land from the Government to which they pay a rent or tax, obtains its full significance here also. But there is an intermediary landlord, between the Government and the actual occupier of the land. How this intermediary landlord arose requires some explanation.

The origin of Malabar according to tradition is that a demi-god Parasurama reclaimed from the sea the portion of land extending from Gokarnam (Bombay) to Cape Comorin and from the Western Ghats to the sea. This demi-god having killed 21 times all the Kshatriyas, and having surrendered to Rama all his possessions after trial of battle, wanted a place to live in. He ordered the sea to recede and thus formed these lands. Malabar is a portion of that land. What historical facts are concealed in this tradition it is not easy to know but it may be guessed that in the general organizing of the Deccan, a certain number of Aryans * crossed the Western Ghats and reclaimed the lands from forest and wild beasts and made it habitable for civilized men. They may have dominated the original inhabitants by their superior civilization and Parasurama may have been the leader of that little band of Aryans. The tradition says that the demi-god gave all the lands he created to 64 Brahmans who became the leaders of the 64 villages into which the whole of the land was divided. These 64 Brahmans formed the original Malabar Brahmans or Nambudris, and they formed an assembly and decided matters of common concern. Individual villages decided their own matters and in every discussion of their affairs the Brahmana was the president and his opinion had perhaps the force of law. The whole village belonged to him and he was the Uralla or the chief man of the village. As time went on the one important family extended its branches and each branch had an equal voice in the affairs of the village. The one became many. I shall refer later to the remnants of this constitution of the village.

* [This hypothesis is ingenious, but not, in my opinion, probable.—Ed.]

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241 leads to the tree fruiting within two or three years, instead of four or five. The leaves that fall from the trees in gardens are used as green manure in the paddy fields and coconut gardens. No such thing as growing green manure is known. No wood or forest is near so that the people may bring the leaves.

242 In fact very little manuring takes place in the village. What is actually done in the cultivation of chief crops is to plough the land. Every year much is drawn from the soil, and nothing is returned to it. I have stated above that lands which returned Rs. 1,000 a year do not now return more than Rs. 400 or 500. The two most potent causes for this deterioration are the system of land tenure and the absence of manuring. Perhaps the second is the result of the first, but I think the want of agricultural knowledge is the cause of the want of manuring and scientific cultivation.

372 *Wood and fuel.*—The outer cover of the coconut, the leaves of the same, mango trunks, serve for fuel for the whole village, and they are obtained in plenty, but the price is rising with the general rise of prices.

[313] Wood for implements, building, etc., is obtained from Cochin State, brought in carts drawn by oxen or buffaloes.

342 *The village—Houses.*—For buildings granite is obtained from a place four miles distant, mortar is prepared in the village, mud
341 from the village itself, tiles from different places, the least distant being twenty miles away, for thatch the leaves of the coconut are used, iron things are bought in the bazaar. The houses in the village are all isolated from one another. Every part of the village is inhabited except the paddy fields. However, at the present day traders have a tendency to build their houses as near the road as possible and form streets. The people also have a tendency to live as near the temple as possible, and this has resulted in the formation of four streets, surrounding the temple on all the four sides. These streets form also the bazaar of the village. There are here about 100 houses.

361 The lands adjacent to the temple are occupied by Brahmans and Nayars. Any other place can be occupied by any family. The
571 houses of the low castes, high castes, and of other religions are intermingled. The same garden may be occupied by Muhammadans, Hindus and Christians, and they all live very amicably as if they belonged to one and the same religion.

735 The Pariahs, whose families are only three in number, occupy certain portions of the land of a big landlord. The landlord gives the Pariahs free houses and a certain allowance a month. He thinks it incumbent upon him to protect and maintain them. Their huts, though small, are yet tidy and neat. The allowance that was freely given them has now become a right. They follow certain industries and go to rich men's houses to beg twice a month, and they are given a certain quantity of rice.

342 There are 977 thatched houses, 313 tiled houses, no terraced houses.

286 *Crafts and industries.*—There are seven families of weavers consisting of 39 members, i.e., 14 men, 12 women, 13 children under fifteen years. They have been in the village from times long past. They weave a cloth 1 foot wide, 1¼ yards long, and this is used as undercloth. They also at times weave a cloth ¾ or 1

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KOTHACHIRA DESAM (PONNANI TALUK).

[*By A. Krishna Wariyar, Christian College, Madras.*]

Preliminary.—This desam is situated about 13 miles south-east of Ponnani, a small thriving town at the mouth of the river of the same name, a Muhammadan centre and the headquarters of the taluk. The visitor to Kothachira leaves the train at Pattambi, the nearest railway station and after a six miles walk along the Pattambi-Chowghat road turns to the left and by a footpath over a rising eminence descends into the paddy fields. A two miles walk southwards through these fields will bring him to the borders of the Kothachira desam. 361

This desam is a completely rural area and there is nothing of interest in the place. The shortest distance from the nearest river (river Ponnani) is 5 miles. Hills and forests are not rare since the desam enjoys proximity to the Akalanum (east) and the Mattur (north) hills. [133]

The term 'desam' literally means a piece of territory. The desam is the political and social unit in Malabar, and is the nearest equivalent to the villages of the east. The chief differences, however, are—(1) the village organization, in its entirety, is not found here; (2) the village has no particular site. The population is distributed throughout the desam area, each individual landholder having his home and family compound often in the midst of his lands and gardens and separated far from his neighbours. 621

Population.—The population of this desam according to the censuses of 1891 and 1901 was as follows:— 162

Year of census.	Number of inhabited houses.	Total population.			Religion.			Occupation.				Population per 100 acres of occupied land.
		Males.	Females.	Total.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.	Others.	Landholders.	Labourers.	Weavers.	Others.	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
1891 ...	295	898	985	1,883	1,678	204	1	767	563	...	553	221
1901 ...	312	961	1,047	2,008	1,808	200	...	559	378	...	1,071	236

The report of the last census (that of 1911) is not obtainable. My enquiry gives the following results:—

Number of houses 333.

Males	...	1,216	Hindus	...	1,990	Landholders	... 442
Females	...	1,107	Muhammadans.		327	Labourers	... 518
			Others	...	6	Weavers	... ...
						Others *	... 1,363
Total	...	2,323			2,323		2,323

* Including all who have no regular occupation, children, women of higher castes, old men, and even a good many young men belonging to joint families.

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VATANAMKURUSSI VILLAGE (WALLUVANAD TALUK).

[*By N. Sundara Aiyar, Presidency College, Madras.*]

361 489 *Preliminary.*—The village lies in the interior of the district, thirty miles west of the municipal town of Palghat on the high road that passes from Palghat to Ponnani. It is to the north of the railway line passing from Calicut to Palghat, and about equidistant from the two railway stations of Shoranur and Pattambi on that line (South Indian Railway). It is fifty-four miles south-east (by railway) of the port of Calicut, the capital of the district.

361 131 The village is more or less surrounded by low hills on all sides, and there is a small forest to the east of it. A portion of the village has for its southern boundary the Bharata Puzha (called the Ponnani river, because it joins the sea at Ponnani). The river is of little use for navigation, since it is in flood during the rains and almost dry in summer. The railway passes through the village, for about a mile, though the nearest railway station is 4½ miles distant. The trunk road from Palghat also passes through the middle of the village. The village is roughly in the shape of a triangle with its apex to the north and the base on the south. Being in the midst of hilly country, dry soil abounds in the village, though the few wet acres are comparatively good.

162 *Population.*—The total population of the village in Census years was as follows:—

Year.	Occupied houses.	Males.	Females.	Total.	Hindus.	Muhammadans.
1891 ...	322	1,055	1,134	2,189	2,116	73
1901 ...	369	1,130	1,187	2,317	2,226	91
1911 ...	398	1,210	1,270	2,480	2,373	107

The figures include those of an adjacent small village, of which the total population in 1911 was 124, all Hindus.

564 There are Brahmans and Sudras, the latter split up into a large number of sub-castes and sects like the Nayars, Nambiyars, Menons, Chettis, etc., and the lower classes like the Thiyyas, or Ezhuvans, and the depressed classes of Cherumas, Pariahs and Nayadis. Nayars predominate in the village. There are a few Muhammadans, but no Christians at all.

Of Brahmans there are ten families comprising 60 individuals resident in the village. There are two families of Nambudiri Brahmans with some 30 members.

162 The great majority are Nayars, of whom there are about 150 families with nearly 1,500 individuals. Cherumas may number between 300 and 400, the Thiyyas or Ezhuvans about 500. The chief minor sub-castes in the village are Chettis (34), Kunparars (Potters, about 50), Asaris (Carpenters, 28), Karuvans (blacksmiths, 21), Thattars (goldsmiths, 19), Panans (makers of bamboo and palm leaf umbrellas, 29), Masons (13), Pariahs (42), and five families of Mannans, washermen of the lower classes, who also make mud walls, engage themselves as herdsmen and act as Pujaris, i.e.,

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313 purchased from the nearest markets and brought in carts. Wood is getting dearer and dearer. It used to be very cheap.

The increase in price is due to the felling of trees without replanting, increased outside demand for fuel, as by the railway company and the Shoranur Tile Works; and the better appreciation and consequent increased demand for the local timber trees.

361 *The village.*—Strictly speaking there is no village-site. The houses are not built in street formation, but are scattered throughout the village. This is characteristic of most villages in Malabar and strongly contrasts with what obtains in other districts. The area of the village is 2,380 acres.

Localization of castes is not complete. Brahmans are located in the centre around the temple, with the Nayars, and the other higher castes surrounding them. The Thiyyas or Ezhuvas live farther apart and the depressed classes—Cherumas, Pariahs, etc.—live far out of the way of the higher castes on the outskirts of the village in hovels on hill sides, which are unfrequented by the other castes. Of course there are social prohibitions to their approaching the higher castes, much more to living near them.

342 There are a few fine houses: about 20 are tiled and have two storeys, about half of them belonging to the Brahmans. About 100 are one-storeyed thatched houses, almost exclusively owned by the castes. The rest are mere huts used by the poorer classes. There is no terraced house at all. Most of the houses are pretty old, but the tiled ones are mostly of recent construction. The houses are built more or less on a uniform plan and are often large without being convenient or comfortable.

The Pariahs and Cherumas live in thatched huts, miserable hovels one should call them, small, dark and exposed.

351 Almost every house has a 'garden' of some sort, with a few fruit trees like the coconut-palm, the mango tree, the jack tree, the areca-palm, plantain trees, etc. But very few houses have really good gardens. The gardens are watered from wells, which are found in every house. Whether there are fruit-trees on it or no, each house of the better class has a compound attached to it. This is sometimes used for growing kitchen vegetables.

361 The distance of cultivated lands from the home of the cultivator is never more than one mile. In the working season the ryot starts very early in the morning from his home with his oxen and agricultural implements so as to reach his land in time.

343 Field huts are almost unknown—except tiny watchmen's huts where watch is kept by a man at night when the crops are getting ready for harvest.

323 *Subsidiary industries—Potters.*—There are no weavers. There is a class of potters, of Telugu origin (as their language shows) engaged in making pots for household use, etc. They get the clay for their industry from the banks of the Bharata river (situated to the south of the village). Their wares find a ready market in the neighbouring villages, being very cheap and necessary. The lower castes cook in pots of burnt clay, while the better classes use bronze and other metals, such as copper. The art is the whole time employment of this class. But earnings are not very high, only just affording the means of subsistence. If the art is refined and improved to suit modern conditions and requirements it